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19th CONGRESS
1st SESSION.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,

ON THE

Construction of a Canal,

TO

Unite the Waters of Lake Michigan

WITH

THE ILLINOIS RIVER.

FEBRUARY 23, 1826.

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MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled:

The Memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Illinos,

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS:

That the construction of a canal, uniting the waters of Lake Michigan with the Illinois river, will form an important addition to the great connecting links in the chain of internal navigation, which will effectually secure the indissoluble union of the confederate members of this great and powerful Republic. By the completion of this great and valuable work, the connexion between the North and the South, the East and the West, would be strengthened by the ties of commercial intercourse and social neighborhood; and the union of the States might bid defiance to internal commotion, sectional jealousy, and foreign invasion. All the States of the Union would then feel the most powerful motives to resist every attempt at dissolution. To effect so great and desirable an object, your memorialists believe to be of sufficient importance to engage the attention, and awaken the munificent patronage of a Government, whose principle of action is the promotion of the general welfare. Your memorialists are sensibly alive to the spirit of improvement that manifests itself in almost every setion of our extensive country, and would fain lend a helping hand in so great and good a cause; their situation, however, forbids their doing much, without the aid of the Federal Government, into whose Treasury almost all the funds, whether brought hither by emigrants, or earned by the industry of their citizens, are paid for the purchase of the public lands. While this state of things shall continue, and the money thus paid into the Treasury of the Union is taken out of our State, our people will not be able to engage in the glorious work of improving our common Country. Ought the people of this State to stand by, with folded arms, and behold the great work of internal improvement progress in other States, without making an effort to improve their own condition; and, at the same time, advance the interest of our beloved country? A condition thus paralysed is at war, not only with our interests, but with the best feelings of our hearts. Did this State possess the public domain, lying within its bounds, as is the case with the older members of this Confederacy, your memorialists would not appear before your honorable body to solicit aid in this important work. If, as your memorialists believe, the construction of this canal would be highly beneficial to the

Union at large; if the receipts into the Treasury of the U. States would be augmented, by the increased sales of public lands; and if the interest of this State would be, also, advanced thereby, is it unreasonable to apply to a paternal government for assistance in the promotion of such beneficial ends? It is unnecessary for your memorialists to enlarge on the great advantages of this canal to the Union, in the facilities to be afforded in the event of a war, either with the Indian tribes inhabiting our frontier, or the British nation. Your honorable body is aware, that this State is situated on the borders of an Indian country, filled with numerous and powerful tribes of the sons of the forest. If our country should be again engaged in war, the saving of expense in the transportations of munitions of war would alone defray the expense of the contemplated canal, and justify the United States in making a liberal appropriation for its construction. Your memorialists do not, however, ask your honorable body to appropriate money out of the Treasury to aid them in this work. They only ask for a tract of land, through which the contemplated canal may pass, and which, for a series of years, will be wholly unproductive to the Government, unless the canal shall be commenced, under auspices favorable to its completion; in which event all the land in the vicinity would immediately become available to the United States. Your memorialists sincerely believe that a liberal appropriation of land, for this object, would, even in a pecuniary point of view, be of immense importance to the Treasury of the Union. The public lands in the vicinity would not only sell, but, at a considerable advance upon the minimum price. Should this opinion be correct, (and does not experience justify it?) the United States would be gainers by the proposed donation to the State. Your memorialists further state, that, at their last session, they passed an act of incorporation, upon very liberal terms, authorizing a company to construct the projected canal; but the remoteness of the country from the residence of capitalists has prevented them from engaging in the work. At their present session, your memorialists have repealed the charter; and, their only hope of soon beginning the work, depends upon the liberality of your honorable body. Your memorialists have caused the route to be explored, and estimates to be made of the probable expense of the work: from which it appears, that the costs of constructing the canal will not be less than $600,000, and may, possibly, amount to $700,000.

To the end, therefore, that your memorialists may be enabled to commence and complete this great and useful work, we pray your honorable body to grant to this State the respective townships of land through which the contemplated canal may pass, the avails of which to be appropriated exclusively to the construction of said canal, upon such terms and conditions as to your honorable body may seem proper.

DAVID BLACKWELL,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.
RAPHAEL WIDEN,
Speaker of the Senate, pro tem.